



eCOMMONS

Loyola University Chicago
Loyola eCommons

History: Faculty Publications and Other Works

Faculty Publications and Other Works by
Department

Fall 2018

Remembering Cindy Lobel

Timothy J. Gilfoyle

Loyola University Chicago, tgilfoy@luc.edu

Follow this and additional works at: https://ecommons.luc.edu/history_facpubs



Part of the [History Commons](#)

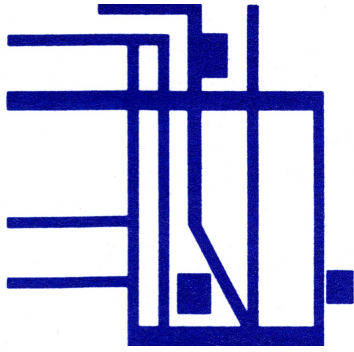
Recommended Citation

Gilfoyle, Timothy J.. Remembering Cindy Lobel. Urban History Association Newsletter, 50, 2: 1-4, 2018. Retrieved from Loyola eCommons, History: Faculty Publications and Other Works,

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Faculty Publications and Other Works by Department at Loyola eCommons. It has been accepted for inclusion in History: Faculty Publications and Other Works by an authorized administrator of Loyola eCommons. For more information, please contact ecommons@luc.edu.



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial-No Derivative Works 3.0 License](#). Author Posting © Urban History Association, 2018. This article is posted here by permission of the Urban History Association for personal use, not for redistribution. The article was published in Urban History Association Newsletter, Volume 50, Issue 2, Fall 2018, <https://uha47.wildapricot.org/resources/Documents/UHA%20Newsletter%20Fall%202018%20Vol.%2050%20No.%202.pdf>



THE URBAN HISTORY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Fall 2018

Volume 50, Number 2

This issue:

Remembering Cindy Lobel	p. 1
President's Letter	p. 4
Executive Director's Report	p. 5
UHA Award Winners	p. 7
UHA Election Results	p. 10
News and Announcements	p. 12
UHA 2018 Conference Recap	p. 13
UHA Conference RFP	p. 15
Bibliographies	p. 17

Connect with us:



Urban History
Association



@UrbanHistoryA

Website: urbanhistory.org

Newsletter Editor:

Hope Shannon, hshannon1@luc.edu

Remembering Cindy Lobel

Prof. Cindy R. Lobel of Lehman College of the City University of New York and membership secretary of the Urban History Association (UHA), tragically passed away on 2 October 2018 at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in Manhattan, only a few hours after her 48th birthday. The cause was breast cancer. Among historians, Prof. Lobel is best-known for her award-winning *Urban Appetites: Food and Culture in Nineteenth-Century New York* (University of Chicago Press, 2014), which was the recipient of the 2013 Dixon Ryan Fox Manuscript Prize, awarded by the New York State Historical Association, and the 2016 Herbert H. Lehman Prize for Distinguished Scholarship in New York History, awarded by the New York Academy of History. She taught urban history, New York history, and Introduction to New York Studies at Lehman. Prof. Lobel was a long-time member of the UHA and served as the membership secretary since 2014.

Cindy Lobel was a leading figure among historians of foodways and cities. She was part of a new generation of “food historians” — Andrew Haley, Hasia Diner, Donna



Photograph courtesy Paul Godwin.

Gabaccia, James McWilliams, Roger Horowitz, William Grimes, Jane Ziegelman, Gergely Baics, and others — who were among the first to recognize that the culinary arts and related social practices were untapped subjects for historians. As a Ph.D. candidate at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York, Cindy worked as a Big Onion tour guide with fellow graduate students and future UHA members like Annie Polland, Jennifer Fronc, and Jeffrey Trask, while teaching as an adjunct lecturer at Baruch College

in Manhattan. Under the mentorship of Carol Berkin and tutelage of Thomas Kessner, Lou Masur, David Nasaw, Barbara Welter, and Ann Fabian, Lobel's dissertation "**Consuming Classes: Changing Food Consumption Patterns in New York City, 1790--1860**" (2003) was the first draft of *Urban Appetites*. Cindy then served as a visiting assistant professor at Barnard College in 2003-04, a Hensch Post-Dissertation Fellow at the American Antiquarian Society in 2004-05, a visiting assistant professor at Connecticut College in 2005-06, and finally as tenure-track assistant professor of history at Lehman College in the Bronx in 2006. She was promoted to associate professor with tenure in 2014. During those appointments, Cindy completely rewrote "Consuming Classes" and transformed it into *Urban Appetites*.

Urban Appetites is unique for historically integrating the themes of ethnicity, class, gender, and culture in a daily practice shared by most humans - eating. Lobel reveals the culinary complexity of nineteenth-century New York and how the diverse waves of immigrants transformed not just the dietary landscape of the city but also the public culture associated with restaurants that serviced specialized clienteles. According to James Fennimore Cooper, the Empire City of the

nineteenth century was an "empire of gastronomy." Lobel explains how and why.

Urban Appetites employs food and eating patterns as a vehicle to inform the evolution of politics, economics, geography, culture, class, and gender in nineteenth-century New York City at the very moment it was growing into the nation's largest and most influential city. Lobel's topics are imbedded with a sense of place: food venues and markets, markets and neighborhoods, restaurants, groceries, retail food shops and private dining rooms. *Urban Appetites* also devotes much discussion to politics, particularly the transformation from the patrician politics of the early republic to the *laissez faire* machine politics of the mid-nineteenth-century; how this evolution influenced the food choices and foodways of nineteenth-century New Yorkers; Tammany Hall's involvement in groceries, saloons, and public markets of New York; the impact of regulation and deregulation of the food markets; how changing state and municipal intervention influenced the quality of the food supply; and the interplay between politics and groceries in the immigrant and working-class wards of the city. Indeed, *Urban Appetites* is as much a book about urban politics and the social impact of provisioning as urban foodways. The Herbert Lehman

Prize citation praised Lobel for her "lucid prose, illustrative anecdotes, and clear organization," and "convincingly demonstrat[ing] that the subject of food, its production and consumption, should take its rightful place in the history of American culture alongside the more established subjects like politics, economics, and the arts. And she has done so with admirable grace and intelligence."

Cindy Lobel was not one to miss an opportunity to use history to speak to the present. In the insightful final chapter of *Urban Appetites*, she compares issues of food accessibility and culture with those of the twenty-first century. "It is here," writes one reviewer, "where Lobel expands her readership not only to historians and food studies scholars interested in the evolution of New York's food culture, but also to activists, urban planners, and foodies concerned with the future of how New Yorkers live, shop, and eat." Lobel's activism continued to her final days. Her husband Peter Kafka wrote on her CaringBridge site upon her passing: "We are not asking you to vote this fall: Cindy would insist that you vote. Her last trip under her own power was to her local polling place for a primary last month. You can do it, too."

Cindy Renee Lobel was born in Philadelphia on 1 October 1970. She was the youngest of four

daughters born to Arthur and Kaaren (Spivak) Lobel. Cindy later graduated from The George School in Newtown, Pa., and earned her B.A. at Tufts University in 1992, where she majored in history and French. In addition to the UHA, she was a member of the Organization of American Historians, the American Historical Association, the Society for Historians of the Early American Republic, and the American Studies Association.

Lobel was also an active public historian. While in graduate school, she served as the Education Coordinator at the Wyckoff House Museum, a historic house museum in the Canarsie neighborhood of Brooklyn. Her NEH-funded podcast "A Walking Tour of Historic Harlem," and article "We Built This City: Playing with Voice in a U.S. Urban History Class" were pedagogical exercises designed for classroom use. At various times, Lobel worked with the Museum of the City of New York and the Lower East Side Tenement Museum on public programs and teacher training.

Lobel was the area editor and contributor to *Savoring Gotham: A Food Lovers' Companion to New York City* (Oxford University Press, 2015). Her articles appeared in the *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of American History*, *History Now*,

Foodstory: The Journal of the Culinary Historians of New York, *Winterthur Portfolio*, *Clio in the Classroom*, *Entertaining from Ancient Rome to the Superbowl: An Encyclopedia*, *Common-Place*, *The Encyclopedia of New York State*, and *The Big Onion Guide to New York City*. At the time of her death, Cindy had two forthcoming articles: "Not So Mean Streets: Community and Activism in the Neighborhoods of Postwar New York" in the *Journal of Urban History* and "Food in the Nineteenth-century American City" in *The Oxford Encyclopedia of American Urban History*. She was also working on two book projects: a study of oystering in New York and the Chesapeake focusing on the African American oysterman Thomas Downing, and a biography of Catherine Beecher for the "Lives of American Women" series of Westview Press and edited by Carol Berkin.

According to her husband Peter, Cindy passed away "peacefully and without pain, surrounded by her mother Kaaren, her sisters Jodi, Susan and Debbie, and myself. We were playing her the Hamilton soundtrack on an iPhone." Cindy is also survived by her sons Benjamin and Jonah, ages 10 and 8 respectively. Her family has requested that those interested in commemorating Cindy's life to forsake the flowers and instead make a donation to the [Triple Negative Breast Cancer Foundation](#), or to

[Everytown](#), "because gun violence enraged Cindy." In addition, a GoFundMe website has been established in which anyone can contribute to a scholarship in Cindy Lobel's name at Lehman College, CUNY, or to the dedication of a bench in Cindy Lobel's name within Brooklyn's Prospect Park where she frequently visited and jogged. Simply go to the family's [GoFundMe](#) page and use the comments section to earmark your donation for a specific purpose.

Among historians and friends alike, Cindy Lobel will be remembered as a passionate teacher, a talented historian, a compassionate colleague, an empathetic friend. She will be missed by members of the Urban History Association, her colleagues and students at Lehman College, and by many, many others.

Timothy J. Gilfoyle

Loyola University Chicago

Urban History Association, Past President

Journal of Urban History, Associate Editor